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ABSTRACT

A holistic approach to teaching reading can assist the underachieving student. The holistic approach includes each of the communication arts in teaching strategies: listening, writing, reading, and oral language (speaking), each of which interacts with the content area. By using the student's own natural abilities to predict, confirm, comprehend, and self-correct in developing teaching strategies within the communication arts in the content area, the teacher can provide a holistic learning experience. (Two demonstration lessons are provided indicating specific steps for the teacher to take and what communication arts and natural abilities are to be utilized. One begins with graphics; the other includes a directed reading activity.) (TJ)

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READING FOR THE "NON-TITLED" UNDERACHIEVER

A HOLISTIC APPROACH

by

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INTRODUCTION

Within the learning and teaching environment in today's schools, the teacher has become the target for increasing attacks on education. Parents and the community are asking why we do not have quality education for all students and particularly for the underachievers, the 'non-titled' reader. The teacher is beset by goals and objectives and evaluation requirements set not by the needs of the individual students but by state and federal guidelines. At the same time, the teacher is faced with problems related to the integration of schools and teaching staffs. Although provided a discrete set of guidelines set forth to be implemented from situation to situation, the teacher still expresses a lack of direction in teaching the subject matter to the students. This lack is a result of the fragmentation of the teaching acts into bits and pieces of instruction which do not necessarily lead to the whole act of learning to read and acquiring the minimal essentials in the communication arts--listening, oral language, reading, writing; and it is the interaction of the communication arts which transmits knowledge of the content area to the student.

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The purpose of this paper is to set forth a holistic approach which includes the interaction of the communication arts, complete with teaching strategies for the secondary teacher to implement in the classroom. These strategies were field tested with underachieving students reading two to three years below grade level and not qualifing for Title I funds.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO TEACHING

The holistic approach includes each of the communication arts in teaching strategies for every lesson in reading content material. The direction of the arrows in the model (Figure 1) shows the interaction of the communication arts with the content area. The model also shows the interaction of listening, speaking, reading and writing in any one content

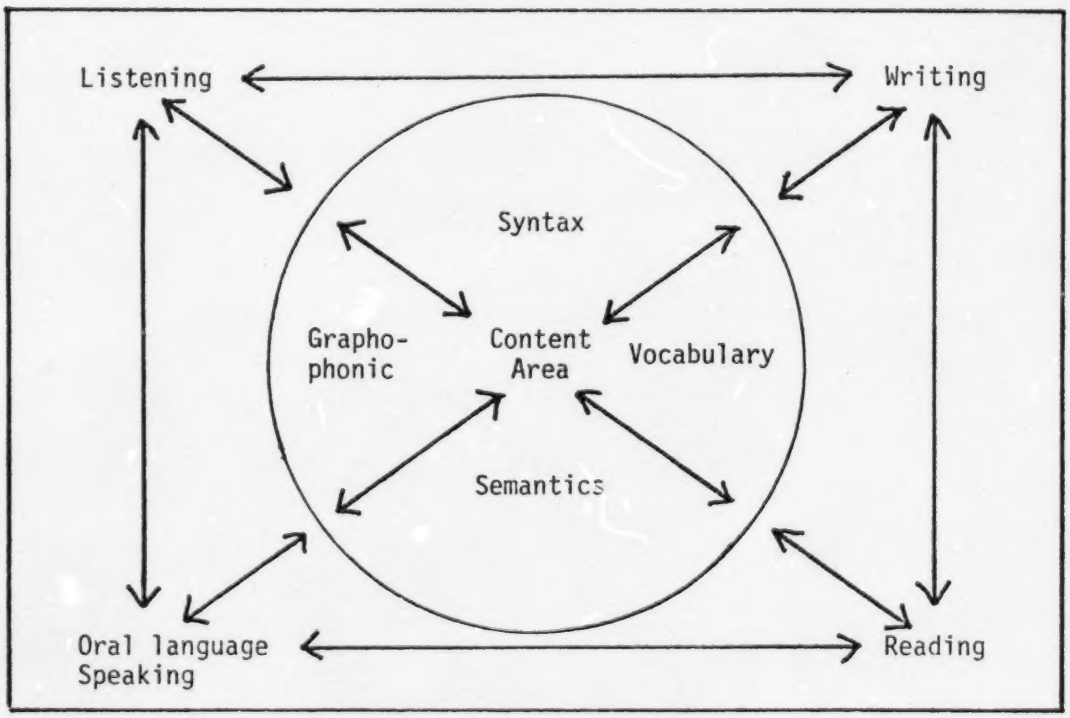


Figure 1. Interaction of the Communication Arts

area, giving rise to its own specialized grapho-phonic, syntactic, semantic, and information cue systems. Without these arts, transmission of ideas would be impossible.

Figure 2 suggests certain teaching strategies which employ these arts in a holistic manner. Since each content area has its own information and cue systems, these must be transmitted to the student through the communication arts which also share syntactic and semantic cue systems of language. By using the student's own natural abilities to predict, confirm, comprehend and self-correct (4) in developing teaching strategies within the communication arts in the content area, the student will have a holistic learning experience.

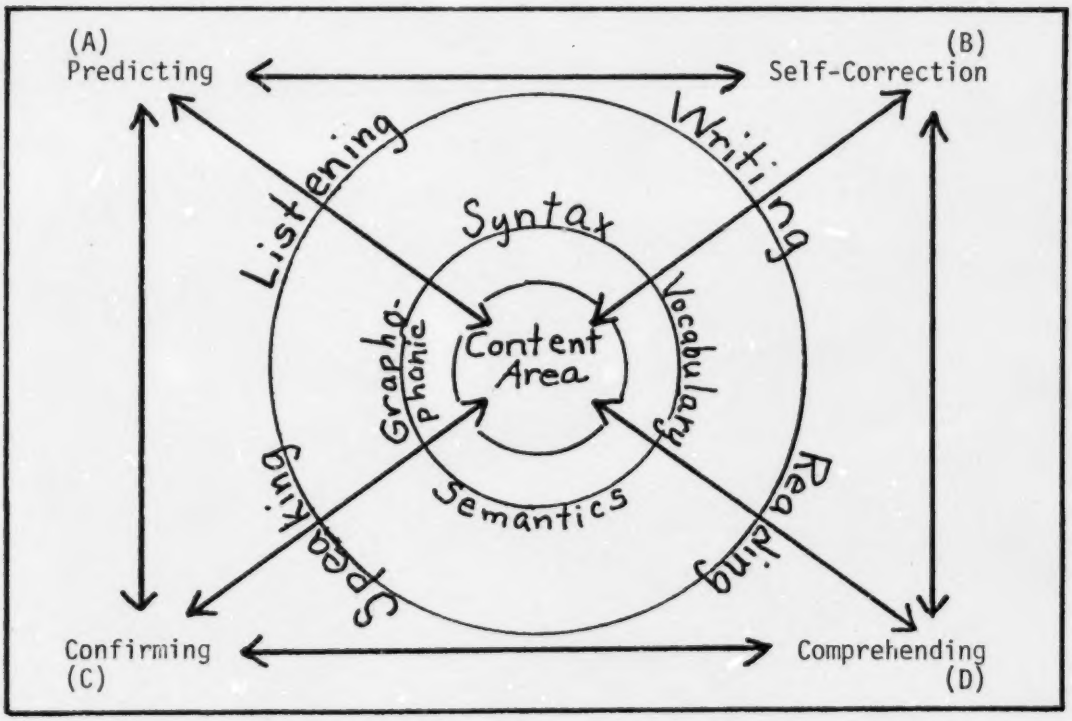


Figure 2. Information Assimilation Process--Natural Abilities

When given information through any one of the communication arts, the student begins by predicting (A) what the information may be all about through selecting and guessing. As the information is assimilated, the student checks or corrects syntactic, semantic and phonological acceptability (B, C) within the framework of his experience. In the next step he comprehends (D) through interaction of meaning with the context of the information being transmitted. If the information from the content area does not fit into the context (C) of the message, the student then employs whatever strategies he has available for self-correction (B) in an effort to comprehend (D) the information he is receiving. As the student develops and extends his natural abilities, he becomes more effective in the use of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Thus, he will be practicing the minimal essentials for effective language communication.

TWO DEMONSTRATION LESSONS IN ENGLISH-READING

The two following demonstration lessons were developed with materials and activities to demonstrate the holistic approach using the students' natural abilities within the communication arts. One lesson begins with graphics and the other with listening and reading.

Graphics to Transmit Ideas and Thoughts

The purpose of this activity is to demonstrate to the student the interrelationship of listening, speaking, reading and writing (5). The student will be actively involved in demonstrating proficiency in each of these areas through participation in the steps which follow. The communication art and natural ability of the student are identified with the step on the right hand of the page in the model, Figure 2.

Holistic Approach

Procedure	Communication Arts	Natural Ability of the Student
Day 1		
Steps		
1. The teacher introduces the idea that a story can be told through the use of pictures we draw. She emphasizes that everyone can draw even if only with stick figures.	Listening	Predicting Guessing
2. The teacher then demonstrates to the class that she can draw an important event in her life with stick figures. She draws four squares on the blackboard and places a sequence of events in each square.		
3. The teacher then tells the class that she will write down the story the pictures tell. She sets her story aside.		
4. The teacher asks the class to discuss what the pictures mean to them. As the discussion takes place, she asks one or two students to record the discussion under each picture.	Oral language Writing Reading	Confirming Self-correction
5. After the discussion and the recording- the teacher compares what the class recorded as a group with what she had written.		Comprehending
6. The teacher then asks the students to think about an important event in their lives to illustrate. They will be asked to draw the event the next day.	Listening	Predicting Comprehending

Day 2

Steps

1. The students are asked to draw the sequence of events that they decided upon overnight.	Writing graphics	
2. The students are asked to write the story of their pictures on the backs of their papers.	Writing	
3. As the students finish their pictures, tape them up around the room and ask them to write down the story someone else's picture tells.		Responding Predicting
4. When all the students have finished, ask each student to tell about the picture he has chosen to the class and to the individual who drew the picture. The accuracy of the discussion is then compared with the written story on the back of the drawing.	Oral language	Confirming Comprehending Self-correction
5. Collect the drawings and stories.		

Day 3 (Optional)

Steps

1. Select one story and its set of pictures for further elaboration of events and description. If available put the transparencies for use with overhead projector.	
2. With the whole class, discuss the drawings as to what else might have happened to elicit ideas from the students.	Predicting
3. Place the transparencies of the original story the student had written on the overhead. Leave space for elaboration of the story. As the suggestions are made, incorporate them into the narrative.	Confirming

4.	Return pictures and stories to each student. Ask the students to pair with a friend. Each is to respond to the other story in the same way they did in the whole class discussion, but on an individual basis.	Listening Oral language Reading	Predicting Confirming Self-correction Comprehending
5.	Each student is then directed to write a final version of his original story, incorporating new ideas.	Writing	

Transmission of Ideas and Thoughts Through Literature

In the past, literature for the underachiever in reading has usually been concerned with students' readability level. As a result, the secondary students have resented being confronted with material which lacks sophistication in vocabulary, syntax and plot. For this demonstration lesson, "All in a Summer Day" by Bradbury (3) was chosen for its high interest and literary quality, and is a perennial favorite of secondary school students. Comparisons and constrasts and the use of figurative language are abundant throughout a fascinating story of life in space involving nine year old children. To capture the interest of the underachiever in reading this story, the use of tapes and overhead transparencies help to focus the students' attention on various tasks throughout the reading. The entire story is read silently along with the tape before identifying difficult vocabulary or concepts. Thus, the students receive a sense of the wholeness of the act of reading through listening to fluent, mature reading.

In the teaching of any piece of literature, certain steps must be taken to ensure smooth progression and transition from one activity to another. These steps incorporate the Directed Reading Activity (1) but also emphasize listening, speaking and writing activities within the total reading lesson.

Holistic Approach

Procedure	Communication Arts	Natural Ability of the Student
Day 1		
Steps		
1. Anticipation and preparation.		
Have the students write a reaction to:		
a. "If I thought the sun wasn't going to shine again for a long, long time, I would . . ."	Listening	Predicting
or		
b. "Rainy weather makes me feel . . ."	Writing	Confirming
2. Ask the students to read or tell what they wrote on their papers.		
3. Introduce the story by telling the students that we are going to hear a story about some people who once settled in a far off place where the sun hardly ever came out.		
Distribute copies of the story or place a transparency of the story on the overhead projector.		
Play the tape as the students read along.	Listening Reading	
4. This story has a very unusual ending because we are not told what happens. Have the students write what they think happened. If time permits, have students share what they have written. Have students turn in their writings.		Predicting

Day 2

Steps

1. Discuss the impact of the story on the students. Include the following questions in the discussion.

   a. What did they like about the story?
   b. What do they think about the way the children behaved in the story?

   Prepare a worksheet for the student to write answers to the questions for preparation for discussion.

   a. Why did the children dislike Margot?
   b. What do you think Margot was doing when the children unlocked the closet door?
   c. What do you think she said to them?
   d. What do you think they said to her?
   e. Do you think the children will feel differently about Margot now that they have had the experience with the sun? Why?

2. Vocabulary Study

   Identify difficult vocabulary and prepare a glossary for dictionary work. Prepare a worksheet with vocabulary and page number and the section of the page where the word is to be found. Examples:

   a. concussion: (page 15a)
   b. avalanche: (page 17d)

   Demonstrate* to the class with a transparency of the story and overlay or on the blackboard how to skim and scan to locate a word.

Oral language

Writing

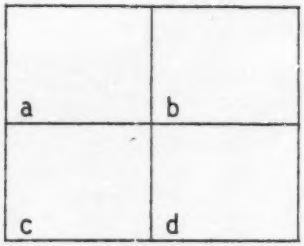
Oral language

Comprehending

Predicting

*Note on page 11.

*Example of overlay to use with page of story written in double columns.



Do several vocabulary words together in a large group before doing the worksheet in small groups or individually as follows:

a. Locate the word on the page in the story as indicated on the vocabulary worksheet.
b. Read the sentences around the word to derive meaning from the context.
c. Select the definition of the word from the glossary which is nearest to the meaning in the text.
d. Write the definition on the vocabulary worksheet.

In addition to word study, this activity will also review the story for the reader and prepare him for Step 3.

Vocabulary game, Three Dimensional Tic-Tac-Toe.--This game may be used after the word study or at any point hereafter. It can be played on one plane using nine squares or on all three planes using twenty seven (27) squares. List and number to nine or twenty seven the vocabulary to be used

Confirming

Writing

Comprehending

during the play of the game. Divide the class into 2 or 3 teams. Each team in turn s lects a word; gives the word in a sentence the way the word is used in the story. If the sentence correctly reflects the meaning, the team symbol (+ - 0) is placed on the square. The play ends when one team gets a tic, tac, toe.

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

10	11	12
13	14	15
16	17	18

19	20	21
22	23	24
25	26	27

3. Guided Reading

Guided reading and detailed examination of blocked sections of the story is facilitated through the use of a combination of Betts' (1) Directed Reading Activity and Manzos' (6, 7) Guided Reading Procedure.

Oral language
Reading

Self-correction
Comprehension

Day 4 Language Study

Steps

1. Study of the use of descriptions and comparisons in the story. Prepare a worksheet for the students to write their responses. Also use the skimming and scanning technique introduced earlier. Example:

a. (15d) What does Margot look like? Find the part on page 15 where it describes Margot and copy the description. What thing is Margot compared with?

Oral language

2. There are many comparisons in this story. Prepare a worksheet for discussion and writing. Examples:

Writing

	Column 1	Column 2 Quality of Object
a. Margot is compared with:	1)	
	2)	
	3)	

b. The author of this story uses many words to describe the rain and how it feels, sounds and looks.

	Touch	Sounds	Appearance
Make a list of these words. Put the describing words in three columns.			

3. Divide the class into small groups to write group stories of a description of an object by using comparisons.

Day 5. Evaluation

1. Develop a Cloze (2) exercise from the story using the vocabulary which has been studied. Be sure to retain the story plot.

Predicting
Comprehending

SUMMARY

This set of teaching strategies interacting with the students' natural abilities and the communication arts should provide the student with a holistic experience in learning. Every student regardless of level should be provided with well written, interesting literature in every reading lesson.

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